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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Western Union Ordered to Cooperate in Smuggling Investigations

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Sept. 18, 2006) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced that Maricopa County Superior Court Judge James H. Keppel has ordered Western Union to produce data relating to wire transactions that provide leads in human and drug smuggling investigations.

The Attorney General's Office, Department of Public Safety, Phoenix Police Department and Arizona Department of Financial Institutions have collected money transmitter data to further their investigations of organized coyote organizations operating in Arizona for several years. When Western Union refused to obey a subpoena that was part of this program, the Attorney General sought a court order compelling the company to produce the requested data.

Judge Keppel ruled that the Attorney General has statutory authority to request this data and that the information sought is relevant to the investigation of racketeering offenses.

"The Attorney General is engaged in good faith in the investigation of racketeering and in the investigation of compliance with transaction reporting statutes," Keppel stated in his order.

"Under these methods the Attorney General is demonstrating appropriate respect for the privacy of the transactions involved," Keppel concluded.

"The data we've collected has led to hundreds of arrests of coyotes and money launderers who support human and drug smuggling operations," Goddard said. "These investigations are helping us secure Arizona's border and making our neighborhoods safer."

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